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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses findings from a research project that examined a new policy initiative--the induction of newly qualified teachers in England. The project studied the impact of a uniform statutory directive across a large school system with hitherto heterogeneous induction arrangements. The evaluation addressed the first 2 years of the implementation and early outcomes of the induction policy, outlining distinctive features, implementation in practice, and problems and successes. After outlining the historical context, the paper discusses how this transitional period is being supported and how it is meeting its objectives. It analyzes continuities and discontinuities of a policy that combines a strong central regulation with a strategy to raise standards in teaching and learning through site-based support and assessment of new teachers. The paper draws parallels with the United States' largest formal induction program, the California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program. Finally, it summarizes challenges facing both systems in relation to entitlement and high quality induction, proposing that these are not likely to be met merely by investing in additional resources and more vigorous surveillance of the system and recommending more adequate conceptualization of early professional development that seeks to reclaim and extend professional accountability. (Contains 27 references.) (SM)

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The Induction of Newly Qualified Teachers—Policy Into Practice

Michael Totterdell, Cath Jones, Sara Bubb and Ruth Heilbronn

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THE INDUCTION OF NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS – POLICY INTO PRACTICE

by

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Abstract

This paper will discuss key findings from a research project that focused on a new policy initiative - the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in England. The project was established to study the impact of a uniform statutory directive across a large school system with hitherto heterogeneous induction arrangements. The statutory induction policy began in September 1999 and our evaluation addressed the first two years (1999-2001) of its implementation and early outcomes. In this paper we outline the distinctive features of the policy, discuss how it has been implemented in practice, and highlight both a range of problems that have been encountered and the successes it has brought.

After sketching the historical context to enhance understanding of the reasoning behind the introduction of the statutory induction in England in 1999, we pick up the themes of how this transitional period is being supported and how well it is meeting its objectives. We analyse the continuities and discontinuities of a policy which combines strong central regulation with a strategy to raise standards in teaching and learning through site-based support and assessment of new teachers. We then seek to draw some tentative parallels with the largest formal induction programme in the United States (the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program – BTSA) based in California (Shields et al, 2001: 96). Finally we summarise some central challenges facing both systems in relation to entitlement and high-quality induction and propose that these are not likely to be met merely by investing in additional resource and more vigorous surveillance of the system. Rather what is called for is more adequate conceptualisation of early professional development that seeks to reclaim and extend professional accountability.

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Introduction

The past thirty years have seen not only the power relations and trust between teachers, higher education and the English state alter dramatically, but also new definitions of what counts as 'educational knowledge' suitable for teachers have emerged (Cowan 2002). Conventional assumptions of the profession have been re-assessed as their foundations have been exposed to shifting sands (Furlong and Whitty et al 2000). Increasingly, the state has sought to shape practice through policy initiatives involving extensive outcomes specification based on a statutory standards-based framework for the teaching profession. This has been reinforced by performance management and rigorous inspection. The relationship between practical and common-sense craft knowledge required for school work and the theoretical, research based 'educational studies' done in the universities once thought to be have been decided has been re-decided. Skills or competencies which all teachers must demonstrate before qualifying and performance targets which they must meet or exceed to achieve recognition and advancement are *de rigueur*.

Our research concerns what has notoriously been regarded as an 'in-between time' or 'cross-over phase': the period of induction that bridges initial (pre-service) teacher education and training and in-service tenure as an established professional. The problems of how to induct new teachers into the profession have long been recognised. Previous research has commented on the variability of new teachers' experiences (HMI, 1988; Earley and Kinder, 1994). By making induction *statutory* throughout England, the central government aims to standardise the provision that new teachers receive across and within schools. Induction aims to make the next generation of teachers 'the best, the best supported, the most positive, the most professional, the most enabled, the most enthusiastic' (Tabberer 2000), and contribute to high retention and recruitment.

The Induction Policy

Understandings of induction in England today are enhanced by critical appreciation of the historical context of policy and practice. It was in 1925 that the Board of Education, the pre-runner of today's government department for education (DfES) first attempted to link initial training and induction, and in 1944 the McNair Report attempted to establish the principle of assessing new teachers' work within a context of proper support. Then, in 1972, the James Report sought to establish an appropriate balance between assessment and professional developments in teachers' first, 'probationary' year. Despite these various reports and recommendations, in the early 1990s the situation was still considered unsatisfactory. This is perhaps best exemplified by findings given in 'The New Teacher in School' (Ofsted, 1993) which became highly influential with policy makers and practitioners. Many aspects of the current statutory induction policy can be seen as stemming from this work but a more direct and immediate outcome was the abolition of the 'probationary year' which had rarely been implemented with rigour and was ideologically at odds with the then Conservative government.

Between 1992 and 1999 there were no national regulations for induction in place. Hence, individual schools and local authorities were free to choose whether or not to offer their own model of induction and how extensive their programme would be. So,

for seven years there was neither assessment of the first year of teaching nor a requirement for schools to provide induction. There were many instances of good practice by schools and local education authorities (LEAs) but these were isolated from one another. It was up to the 'professional integrity of heads, teachers and advisers to sustain and encourage good practice' (Bleach 1999, p.2). Nevertheless, the broad agreement between the profession, local authority employers and successive governments was that the induction of NQTs was inadequate and ought to be improved (Bolam et al 1995, p.247). There was widespread consensus (e.g. Earley and Kinder 1994; HMI 1993; Mahony 1996; Simco 1995 and 2000) that, throughout the country:

- there were no systematic links between induction and the early professional development of teachers;
- the issue of individual needs was not uniformly addressed; and,
- provision was highly variable across and within schools and LEAs.

It is against this background that induction was made statutory in England in May 1999. Now, all NQTs have to complete a statutory induction period of a school year (full time), to teach in state maintained schools. The policy has two main principles:

- A national entitlement for NQTs, to support and professional development.
- Assessment of NQTs against defined national standards.

Thus, induction in England can be seen as a 'carrot and stick' policy, incorporating simultaneously the dual forces of enticement plus punishment, and is also in the spirit of one of the government's key principles - "zero tolerance of under-performance" (DfEE, 1997). It should make the first year of teaching considerably easier but carries the threat of individuals being barred from teaching if they cannot demonstrate that they meet all the standards achieved during their initial training and the ten additional Induction Standards. Further, these standards are more than a hurdle to cross or hoop to pass through – they are very demanding (Bubb, 2000).

Along with this pressure, support is offered. The government intends induction to be 'a bridge from initial teacher training to effective professional practice' (DfEE 1999, para.1). It gives a reduced timetable and a framework of monitoring, support and diagnostic assessment. No longer should a successful first year of teaching be a matter of luck and favours: it is an entitlement that should be planned by schools, adequately funded, and which headteachers are required by law to give. Provision should comprise:

1. A 10 per cent lighter teaching timetable than other teachers in the school.
2. A job description that doesn't make unreasonable demands.
3. Meetings with the school 'induction tutor' (mentor), including half termly reviews of progress.
4. An individualised programme of support, monitoring and assessment.
5. Objectives, informed by strengths and areas for development identified in the career entry profile, to help them meet the induction standards.
6. At least one observation of their teaching each half term with oral and written feedback.
7. An assessment meeting and report at the end of each term. NQTs who are doing well perceive these as a carrot – they are a stick for those who are having problems.
8. Procedures to air grievances at school and local education authority level.

Prior to our own research, there had been little large-scale empirical research since the introduction of statutory induction. However, the relevant government policy documents have led key commentators to wide-ranging conclusions. Bleach considers the induction arrangements a "judicious combination of entitlements and expectations for newly qualified teachers" (Bleach 2000, p.18). Bubb says that they are a welcome development but asks 'Is a competence-based assessment that takes no account of individual context fair?' (Bubb 2000, p. 8), thereby highlighting the issue of a single policy for hugely diverse circumstances. Simco is positive, saying that the new arrangements "address many of the issues which appeared to be compromising earlier attempts at creating effective linkage between policy and practice in induction" (Simco 2000, p.16). However, he predicts problems with the validity and reliability of assessment of NQTs and also questions the consistency of provision over time and space. Tickle disagrees with the underpinning idea of the policy that a continuum, or 'bridge', is necessary in the professional development of teachers. He asserts that NQTs should be prepared for "discontinuities; radically new and different experiences; for turbulence..." (Tickle 2000, p.11) and that the policy is predicated on a false picture of NQTs as deficient rather than seeing them as agents for change: 'an enviable resource', with 'creative potential'.

Our Research

Our research was an evaluation of the effectiveness of a policy which took statements from within the key policy text (Circular 90/2000) and translated these as directly as possible into questions to ask practitioners. The statements acted as criteria against which the policy could be assessed. While sceptical that research findings can be used to directly guide the action of policy makers, our belief is that research should be part of a 'policy cycle'. As Selby-Smith demonstrated in the Australian context, research can be used at different stages: in problem identification and agenda setting, in policy formulation, and in evaluation, which provides opportunities for fine-tuning (Selby-Smith 2001, p.3).

The researchers sought to conceptualise their research in terms of

- process – the way the policy is implemented, for example, how its principles were translated into practice
- output – by measuring the 'products' of the policy, for example how many NQTs were inducted successfully or otherwise
- outcome, by assessing the impact of the of the policy on those affected by it.

The research design used to evaluate this policy intervention did not employ an experimental design such as the randomised controlled trial involving a before-and-after study either with or without a control group. This was because the uniform roll-out of a national policy invariably thwarts such an approach. Instead we undertook what were in effect cohort studies of the initial and subsequent year of policy implementation together with some descriptive work. As with any study undertaken in a 'real life' setting such as schools, the results were ambiguous in some respects reflecting the complexity of behaviour and attitudes and the nuances of tracking the lived experiences of those working in diverse contexts. Moreover, the timing of the research meant outcomes assessed had not really had long enough to bed in to demonstrate their full

impact. This notwithstanding, we are confident that the key findings are compelling and the implications of the research are far reaching.

We combined quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to pursue the full range of objectives. For instance, we visited 24 schools of different sizes and types to carry out case studies of how the different components of induction were being implemented in specific contexts. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with an NQT, induction tutor and the headteacher in each school, visiting on two separate occasions in order to judge experiences at different stages in the induction period and the embedding of the policy over time. This substantiated the survey methods work – 1200 postal questionnaires to key players. Responses were gained from 62% of the 150 local education authorities in England, 247 head teachers and 223 induction tutors in state-maintained schools throughout the country, and 240 of the 1999-2000 and 328 of the 2000-2001 cohorts of NQTs. In order to investigate induction in the non-standard settings a selection of head teachers and induction tutors in independent schools, special schools and sixth form colleges (for students aged 16+) were also surveyed, though in smaller numbers. Telephone interviews with key personnel in local education authorities and supply teacher agencies were also conducted.

Research Findings

Overall, our research strongly suggests that, since the introduction of the statutory induction policy in England, the quality of provision for newly qualified teachers has improved. Furthermore, there is overwhelming agreement among headteachers, induction tutors and local authorities that statutory induction is helping NQTs to be more effective teachers in the classroom.

Main findings

1. The majority of schools give consistent and individualised support that is welcomed by the NQT and eighty one per cent of NQTs enjoy their induction period either 'very much' or 'quite a lot' (43% and 38%, respectively).

2. A large minority (approximately 20%) of NQTs are experiencing provision from their schools that is less than satisfactory. One third of NQTs said that their school's provision was limited in amount or poor in quality and this explained their slow progress. These NQTs are, for example, not consistently receiving their 10% timetable reduction, find their induction tutor inaccessible and/or do not have a coherent individual induction programme. The Appropriate Body is ideally placed to resolve this variability in provision through more systematic monitoring and better focussed support. This is something that is currently being worked towards in many, but not all, Appropriate Bodies.

3. The 10% reduction in teaching timetable is agreed by all participants to be vital because it facilitates induction activities. Lesson observation, both of and by the NQT, was the most highly rated induction activity. Eighty nine per cent of NQTs surveyed found observations and feedback from induction tutors was either 'very useful' or 'useful'.

4. Appropriate Body observation and feedback was also valued: visits were of 'consistently high quality', feedback was 'constructively worded' and the positive comments 'really boost motivation in the classroom for things you want to improve upon'. NQT training sessions were appreciated for many reasons such as developing new professional skills, forming networks with NQTs from other schools and providing 'thinking space' away from immersion in day-to-day work. NQTs were critical of Appropriate Body sessions with 'unmotivational presentation styles'.

5. NQTs wanted sessions run by local authorities to address behaviour management very early on and to suggest a range of practical solutions to difficulties.

6. Twenty two per cent of local authorities explicitly said that they gave support on a 'whole team' basis, i.e. including the NQT induction tutor, headteacher and others. These Appropriate Bodies do not see the failure or the success of individual NQTs in isolation from their working context.

7. The Career Entry Profile was widely found to be unsatisfactory and is therefore not being implemented as it was intended. Nevertheless, most induction tutors and two thirds of NQTs thought that statutory induction *had* helped to create a bridge from initial teacher education, and was helping to provide professional continuity and progression into Continuing Professional Development. There is some evidence that a good induction programme aids recruitment. However, where the programme is unresponsive to individual needs, this may adversely affect retention.

8. Temporary contracts may be influencing recruitment and retention as there was some evidence of schools making NQTs 'prove their colours' before being awarded a permanent contract.

(Totterdell et al 2002)

Discussion

The paper now turns to discuss key issues of the statutory induction policy as it is currently being practised in schools and experienced by NQTs:

- Variability in provision
- Central regulation
- School management of induction
- Importance of the 10% release time
- Career Entry Profile
- Role of Induction Tutor
- Assessment
- Retention

Within each issue, problems and successes are outlined, explained and then explored for their wider implications for singular policies for all new teachers, regardless of national setting. Of particular interest are the dynamics between different participants including support networks. The research compares and contrasts the perspectives of all

participants: newly qualified teachers, induction tutors, head teachers in schools; the local education authorities who have a role in ensuring that induction is being carried out properly; and providers of training for newly qualified teachers and induction tutors.

Variability in provision

In relation to entitlement, statutory induction had undoubtedly heightened staff awareness of the importance of meeting the needs of NQTs. Secondary headteachers said this was especially true for heads of department. Some induction tutors thought that it had facilitated and ensured provision, through dedicated funding and the subsequent allocation of time. One said, 'NQTs had always been supported, but different departments did things differently and knowledge was patchy. Now I know they know what they need to about the school, teaching here etc.' Another induction tutor concurred:

> In the past the level of support varied depending on the department the NQT joined. The current system ensures a minimum high level of support. It also provides departments with guidelines to use in assessment of NQTs and formalises the responsibilities other staff have for induction and support.

There was considerable evidence that although those responsible for providing induction felt the entitlements were being met, NQTs were quite often dissatisfied with its quality and inconsistency of provision. Indeed, the most common area needing improvement identified by the 552 NQTs surveyed was tighter monitoring of their school's provision. The following examples of NQTs' comments exemplify this:

> To somehow make sure all schools/induction tutors are giving NQTs the same support and opportunities for professional development – My support was very different to that of friends.

> I think it would be good for the induction providers to have more of a rigid programme of support. It may have been helpful to be watched over by an external party – perhaps someone from the LEA rather than the headteacher.

The language used here is that of accountability - 'make sure', 'check' and 'monitor induction in schools'. This seems quite extraordinary in the light of all the measures built in at the national policy level for ensuring provision, as discussed earlier.

The research found that there are some very specific elements of statutory induction which are consistently problematic when implemented in certain contexts. Although we are not claiming the following list to be definitive, five such situations identified were:

- schools where there are significant teacher shortages,
- schools where there are strongly competing demands on teacher's time,
- small schools where the headteacher is the induction tutor and the NQT suffers from isolation;
- schools where NQTs find the behaviour of children in the class(es) they regularly teach to be very challenging, and;
- NQTs trying to do induction as a supply teacher.

We are not implying that induction is necessarily less effective in these contexts. Rather, the importance of appropriate management of it becomes even more crucial.

Central regulation

Headteachers and induction tutors in all sectors thought that making induction statutory had helped 'because schools have got to do it'. In state schools, for example, nearly 40% said it had improved NQT effectiveness to 'a substantial extent' and 50% said it had done so 'quite substantially'. Ten per cent said it had improved effectiveness 'a little' and only 1% said 'not at all'. However, many said that their schools already had good induction practices before the post-September 1999 induction period was introduced, so the difference between NQTs now and in previous years was not very noticeable. A headteacher who had successfully supported many NQTs in the past, however, considered that

> This new structure makes it much more rational and there's a clear pattern to what's going on, clear expectations... We feel we've got far greater control of the way things develop under the new structure.

It appears that schools without a history of strong practice in this area considered the impact to be greatest.

Many headteachers and induction tutors thought that the structure of induction had accelerated the progress of their NQTs, enabling them to get to grips with aspects of teaching such as using assessment to inform planning, earlier than previously. Many thought that the policy had raised both the NQTs' and their expectations of what should be achieved in the first year of teaching. As one headteacher stated, 'It has quite properly raised expectations that people will from a fairly early point be competent professionals who just lack experience, who don't lack competence.' The termly assessment meetings in particular were considered to have stopped people slackening off or 'stepping off the ladder' and kept them focussed. One headteacher said that 'things aren't being accepted which will turn into bad habits and create bad teachers.'

Induction regulations came into force at a time characterised by rapid policy implementation – some would say policy overload. Induction is part of the government's 'unrelenting pressure on schools and teachers for improvement' (DfEE 1997, p.11), but this raises questions about the time individuals in schools were able to devote to induction given other demands.

School management of induction

Good management of induction at school level was found to be essential. Some NQTs highlighted regularity and structure of the various practical elements involved, as beneficial: 'Courses every Wednesday afternoon and weekly half an hour meetings with my induction tutor were brilliant'. Induction worked well when it was strictly timetabled and there was protected time devoted entirely to meetings, activities etc. Of course, regular and focused support is integral to the national policy.

The number of informal meetings reported in the surveys indicates that the majority of schools give the NQT individualised support. A primary coordinator reported that the programme was 'totally and utterly tailored to the objectives and the action plan...everything from that first meeting with the CEP, setting objectives and action plan.' She planned the programme from her initial needs analysis. Courses were identified and the NQTs met with all the curriculum coordinators, the SENCO and

somebody from the inclusive learning service, 'and went through all the stage procedures, and the school, SEN resources…'.

In schools where there is a teacher shortage, induction tutors have less time to spend with their NQTs and cover for the 10% release time is difficult to arrange because the demand for supply teachers elsewhere is already very high. Schools in difficulties were more likely to have inadequate induction provision. This in turn leads to new teachers avoiding the very schools that need them most.

In schools with basic characteristics outside the norm of compulsory age state schooling there were found to be particular issues. For example, NQTs working in sixth form colleges (for 16 to 18 year olds) who think they want to teach younger children at some point in the future have to do induction and the college staff can choose to provide it. However, the less than straightforward regulations for induction under these circumstances have led to some unfortunate misunderstandings occurring where NQTs thought they were being given statutory induction but have not been taken through a programme leading to meeting the Induction Standards.

NQTs doing induction whilst working as supply teachers are also only partially accommodated by the policy. In order to do induction on supply three full terms of work is needed (anything less than a full term does not count). Yet it is a moot point as to why a school would want to invest resources in a teacher who was not going to be there for long. Despite funding, induction is only rarely willingly and fully provided for NQTs on supply. For these reasons, we discovered that the number of NQTs on supply has decreased radically since the introduction of statutory induction.

Importance of the 10% release time

The 10% release time is made possible through the central government funding of £3,000 per NQT per year to schools. The money is intended to provide the necessary help and support to the NQT including funding the lighter timetable, to carry out assessment during the induction period and to monitor and evaluate the new arrangements (DfEE 1999, para.101). However, once replacement teachers have been paid for to cover the NQT's release time, schools find that there is little money left over for other activities. Nevertheless, funding is crucial for the induction period to be a success because it enables the release time to be given, in theory at least.

A large number of NQTs did not receive their basic entitlement of release time. Our research found that in 1999-2000 20 per cent of NQTs and in 2000-2001 19 per cent of NQTs, had not received their release time throughout the induction year. The main reasons as to why NQTs were not receiving their release time were that:

- NQTs' free periods had been used to cover for absent colleagues in secondary schools
- People allocated to teach primary NQTs' classes were used to cover classes of absent colleagues
- There were no supply teachers of sufficient quality to teach NQTs' classes.
- Some supply agencies charged so much that the £3,000 a year funding did not cover a reduced timetable throughout the year
- Some schools claimed that they had no money for the reduced timetable.

The extent to which schools ensured that release time was spent on induction activities varied considerably in our research. About a quarter of NQTs said that they had had no activities during their induction year, suggesting that they were using it simply as general 'non-contact' time. Lesson observations of all kinds were found to be the most cost effective and useful ways to develop as a teacher.

The Career Entry Profile

The Career Entry Profile (CEP) was found to be the least useful component of induction. In many cases it quickly lost relevance and thus failed to fulfil its potential as a reflective, developmental tool, being regarded by many NQTs as unnecessary extra paperwork. This was sometimes the result of the CEP having low status in school and induction tutors not knowing quite what to do with it. It was not always seen as the keystone of induction, as one NQT said, 'I soon found that things I was concerned about before I started teaching were no longer a concern.' The CEP was described as being not unlike like a reference in celebrating strengths but less successful in identifying points for development, as people were wary of writing about weaknesses, and found such identification unhelpful for future development.

The CEP is meant to start off the whole induction process. We found that 20% of NQTs had discussed their CEP, usually with their induction tutor, 'before the start of the first term'. Sixty-four per cent had discussed the CEP 'at the start of the first term', but 8% had only done so 'later in the school year'. This is worrying, since delaying sharing the CEP after the start of the first term defeats its purpose. The research found that Induction tutors rarely read the Notes of Guidance which formed part of the CEP, because it belonged to the NQT and few tutors had their own copy. This led to a second problem in that the CEP is supposed to be used to set objectives at the beginning of the induction period but almost 20% did not use it in this way, indeed 7% set no objectives at all. Questions are raised by the failure of a significant minority to use the CEP for objective setting and by those who avoided or delayed discussing it, since these are clear responsibilities.

The usefulness of the CEP depended greatly on how it was completed. Many NQTs did so in a rush at the end of their initial training course, as a tacked on element, rather than an organic part of the training process. The worst university practice found was where strengths and areas for development had to be chosen from a bank of statements. Induction tutors wanted the CEP to act as an up to date appraisal: 'It works better when it's not just a self-audit, but it represents in fact an outsider's perspective from the training provider'.

Role of Induction Tutor

Induction tutors have the key role in induction provision and they need to have a wide range of skills, knowledge and experience, including in-depth understanding of the standards for qualified teacher status and induction, and of the contexts of education and professional development. Many induction tutors are dedicated to maintaining good induction provision, often without being given time or financial reward. The large majority of induction tutors received support and training for their role from the LEA, although a significant minority did not, which is a concern.

One factor here in the context of role-relationships was that weak NQTs require a lot more work: If an NQT needs extra support the workload implications are greater. For example, one primary school had taken on an NQT who had failed his first assessment in another school. The induction tutor worked closely with the NQT, setting monthly objectives, to enable him to pass his induction period. 'My role is very much one of supporting but also it's especially important in this situation that I've had to set very close targets to ensure that the NQT does achieve the standards required of him... It's added to the strain of everything else'. More generally the quality of the relationship between Induction Tutors and NQTs was found to be highly significant for the effective support of induction. Attentive support by induction tutors was further reinforced when responsibility for inducting new teachers was perceived as involving the whole school and when this in turn was supported at Local Authority level by a 'whole' team' support package including NQTs, the induction tutor, headteacher and others.

Assessment

Assessment against the standards is an essential facet of the induction process since it leads to the key judgement about whether NQTs will pass and continue their career or fail. Where NQTs do not prove themselves to be successful teachers during their induction year, schools and Appropriate Bodies need to consider failing them. This only involves a very small number. In the first year of statutory induction only 45 NQTs failed, and 16,000 passed. One might therefore wonder why there is such an elaborate 'net' to 'catch' so few weak teachers. Someone failing induction is never allowed to teach in a maintained or non-maintained school again, ever. Induction cannot be repeated. Yet assessment against the standards is in the hands of staff in school who may have little experience of judging what is 'good enough'. Evidence gained in inspections does not form part of the induction assessment. It is the headteacher and induction tutor who make the key recommendation to the Appropriate Body about whether an NQT is meeting the standards. This is potentially problematic, as one induction tutor pointed out.

> You could get some zealot in some school, some Head of Department who is a personality, who gets a pretty good NQT and ends up failing them, and also is the type of dogmatic person who sticks to their guns. Some good NQTs could end up failing or only passed after a lot of hoo ha.

Monitoring mechanisms are still only in the early stages of development. One such mechanism is the assessment report - a key item in the flow of information through which local authorities become aware of NQTs who are struggling to make sufficient progress towards achieving the induction standards. Yet, many local authorities do not receive the full complement of assessment reports from schools nor do they receive them on time.

The induction circular lays out a number of responsibilities of the headteachers in relation to assessment. In practice, their role appears to be closer to monitoring than assessing per se. The headteachers who discussed assessment with us said they assessed NQTs through one or more of the following activities: assessing the NQTs planning; occasionally 'wandering' into the NQTs classroom; conducting observations, and; seeking the induction tutors' and other staff's opinion. One headteacher assessed the NQT during the final review meeting alone by examining all the NQT's induction

documentation and another described how he read the final report, checked its accuracy and then endorsed it. It hard to categorise this approach to assessment of NQTs by the gatekeepers of the profession except to say that it is probably neither synoptic nor authentic and might, perhaps, better be described as episodic or impressionistic assessment. The researchers noted a general reluctance to fail NQTs and the stratagem of moving them on to other schools raises some ethical issues when a newly employing headteacher does not have relevant documentation.

Retention

In England, up to 40% of teachers leave within the first five years of joining the profession. It is too early to tell whether induction is having an impact upon retention. Nevertheless, our research provides several insights on this topic. First, the indications are that the induction policy may contribute to retaining teachers but that other policies that consume teacher time and energy may outweigh the benefits it provides. Second, a significant minority of NQTs found the paperwork and assessments associated with induction to be a burden and made comments such as 'I've already proved myself during the (very tough) initial training. Why should I be asked to repeat it when the country is crying out for teachers?' Another aspect of interest is that 37% of NQTs still received temporary contracts and this may be influencing recruitment and retention as there was some evidence of schools making NQTs 'prove their colours' before being awarded a permanent contract. The research found some examples of schools and Local Authorities taking a more strategic approach to induction as part of their human resource strategy but this was not widespread. The concept of an 'early professional development package' that includes but goes beyond the statutory requirements providing avenues to a higher professional degree and appropriately linked to housing, travel and loan repayment benefits has much to commend it.

Parallels with California's BTSA Initiative: towards a universal typology of best practice induction

Policy-makers in California as in England have recognised the importance of new teachers' first years in the profession. Indeed, California can justifiably claim to lead the nation in its support of new teacher induction through its BTSA programme. The importance of induction is reflected in recent legislation that sharpens the focus on rigorous standards for the teaching profession. BTSA has gone from a relatively small programme to a large and vital part of the state's strategy to improve the quality of teaching and reduce attrition. With the introduction of the new credential system in 2003, California will make induction support a mandatory part of learning to teach. Already, nearly all teachers report receiving some kind of induction support. However, overall, only a minority of new teachers report receiving the kind of intensive induction support that they find most valuable, and the impact of induction experiences in terms of fostering the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of new teachers necessary to retain them in the profession and help their students achieve high standards was reported as having been only moderate (Shields et al 2001, p. 96).

While there are obvious differences between the respective induction systems that have to do with issues of school reform, centralisation, funding and resources and focussed surveillance by government agencies (cf., Glenn 2001 p. 23 – 25), of wider interest are

some of the parallels between the English and Californian experience in relation to the characteristics of quality induction. The overall purposes of induction are consonant: improving teachers' skills and knowledge and keeping them in the profession. Thus, induction programmes in California, as in England, are a key element of a strategy aimed at alleviating teacher shortage and improving the overall quality of the state's teaching force.

The most common types of support reported by new teachers in California were orientation sessions and workshops, the formal assignment of an experienced teacher to provide mentoring, release time to observe other teachers and observation of new teachers in their class by other educators. Notably, opportunities to interact with colleagues were perceived to create important learning opportunities and are critical strategies in establishing an open and collaborative professional culture. Indeed, new teachers attributed the quality of their induction support to the quality of their relationship with their mentors or support providers. However, in general, those who received more types of support reported a greater perceived impact than those who received less support. Other research has demonstrated that induction programs can lead to increased retention among new teachers (Briggs et al 2001). These factors also feature prominently in our own research findings representing, perhaps, the key elements of induction entitlement consistent with successful outcomes.

Based on our research findings in the English context and those of the Californian survey, it appears that at least three conditions govern successful induction into the profession. While these vary in nature, intensity and scope, they are common to the English and American experience. First, new teachers need to be well prepared before taking on the responsibilities of the classroom and induction should represent a bridging experience into full professional teacher status and practitioner capacity. Secondly significant support from policy makers and regional administrators, as well as from school leaders who view the support of new teachers as a central part of their jobs, is indispensable to establishing a level of expectancy in the system that facilitates release time to observe other teachers, protection from taking on too many extra responsibilities in the first year of teaching, visits from experienced teachers and the creation of a positive school climate and working environment. Crucially, in such a school climate, teacher learning was seen as linked to student learning. Thirdly, the quality of induction support is underpinned by designated staff support in the form of induction tutors and/or mentors who are time-tabled or otherwise freed up from other duties and commitments to operate in this role. Moreover, both the BTSA and the English induction arrangements appeared to work best when the whole school ethos embraced the idea of inducting beginning teachers into the profession.

California faces the future challenge of implementing mandatory participation in an induction program as part of its credentialling system by 2003. England has similarly moved from something that's voluntary to statutory and our research indicates that it is possible to do this by building on the strengths of the previous systems while moving a long way towards eliminating their weaknesses. The sheer numbers create challenges in terms of the logistics of dissemination of information to schools and individuals and the extent of the quality assurance and quality enhancement mechanisms that need to be put in place. But our research also suggests that induction must engage with the *affective domain* (Earley 1993). If induction is to be more than a formality and if it is not to be seen by teachers as merely an additional hoop to jump through, then the infrastructure,

processes, assessment and links to continuing professional development invoked must be owned by all teachers and seen to ultimately benefit them and their students.

Conclusion: the challenges of providing effective induction support for all teachers

The Project's research findings - consistent and individualised support for NQTs in schools, the benefits of a reduced timetable, the efficacy of structured observation of and by NQTs, the critical role of induction tutors in ensuring entitlement and the capacity of Local Authorities to establish a supportive framework with high expectations - indicate that the statutory induction arrangements are generally a positive experience for most new teachers and are contributing to improved standards of teaching. However, how different groups of schools and local education authorities implement the induction policy varies. Thus, despite unprecedently tight legislation, the experiences of individual teachers remain varied.

It is during teachers' first years in the profession that they shape their attitudes, beliefs, and practices. Effective induction support can increase new teachers' skills and knowledge and has been shown to improve their retention rates (Humphrey et al 2000; Totterdell et al 2002). Elsewhere, we have drawn on our research to offer insights to practitioners as to how this might best be achieved (Bubb et al 2002). But is the mixture of 'carrot and stick' now so familiar in England effective? Our analysis suggests that the support is essential and that some assessment against standards probably is too if the profession is to be creditable with stakeholders and accountable to learners as being both responsible and responsive. Nevertheless we think our research raises questions about both the efficacy of mere compliance with regulations and guidance – necessary though that may be in terms of the fundamentals - and about the effectiveness of the strict competence-based assessment model in judging the professional practice of new teachers? We also take the view that to optimise induction, it should to be set within a more strategic and all encompassing milieu of early professional development enabling new teachers to engage meaningfully with the wider context of teachers responsibility for their own learning and self-directed professional development.

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18

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